



CITY OF SAINT PAUL Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

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MEMORANDUM

DATE:

October 28, 2009

TO:

Comprehensive Planning Committee

FROM:

Lucy Thompson and Jess Rosenfeld, Planning Staff

SUBJECT:

Central Corridor LRT Downtown Station Area Plan: Release for Public

Review and Set Public Hearing Date

Attached for your review is a draft of the Downtown Station Area Plan for two of the three downtown Central Corridor LRT stations – 4th/Cedar (hereinafter referred to as Central) and Union Depot. (Note: The third downtown LRT station at 10th/Cedar will be addressed through an update of the Fitzgerald Park Precinct Plan.) Staff will provide an overview of the Plan at the Committee's November 10, 2009 meeting, and ask the Committee to recommend that the Planning Commission release the document for public review at its November 13, 2009 meeting and schedule a public hearing for December 18, 2009.

As with the previously-adopted plans for the seven LRT stations along University Avenue, a steering committee of community representatives and stakeholders oversaw the planning process that resulted in the Downtown Station Area Plan. The steering committee was co-chaired by Commissioner Kristina Smitten.

Several LRT project-related issues arose during the preparation of the Downtown Station Area Plan. Most notably, the location of the Operations and Maintenance Facility, the potential for a new Saints ballpark in Lowertown, and an intensive Section 106 process related to the siting and design of the Union Depot station all contributed to an elongated planning process. Staff ensured that the community was involved in these issues and understood how their resolution impacted the station area plan, and allowed for the planning process to pause to consider these opportunities. In fact, the Plan that is attached for your review is the second community draft; a first draft was prepared in June 2009 and taken to the Lowertown neighborhood for feedback prior to completion of a public hearing draft. Some of the decisions made as part of the LRT project proved very controversial in Lowertown, and staff tried to use the evolving plan as a vehicle to address community concerns related to those decisions.

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Staff is recommending the following schedule for Planning Commission review and recommendation, and City Council adoption:

2009

November 10 Downtown Station Area Plan reviewed by Comprehensive

Planning Committee: Committee recommends release for public

review and public hearing date.

November 13 Planning Commission releases Downtown Station Area Plan for

formal public review and sets public hearing date of December 18,

2009.

December 18 Planning Commission public hearing.

2010

January 5

Comprehensive Planning Committee reviews public comments.

Planning Commission approves plan, sends it to City Council for

final adoption.

February/March

January 22

City Council adoption of Downtown Station Area Plan as an

amendment to the Central Corridor Development

Strategy/Comprehensive Plan.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Comprehensive Planning Committee forward the Downtown Station Area Plan to the Planning Commission to release it for public review, and recommend a public hearing date of December 18, 2009.

Please feel free to contact LucyThompson at lucy.thompson@ci.stpaul.mn.us or 651.266.6578 if you have any questions prior to the November 10, 2009 Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting.

Attachment